

Soviet Intensifies Build-up Of Defense Arms in Cuba

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 22—Soviet forces in Cuba were reported to be working round-the-clock on the construction and improvement of highly sophisticated ground and air defenses for the island. Private reports from Havana, confirmed in part by American experts on the Cuban situation, say that large shipments of weapons and other materials are continuing to arrive in Cuba.

Soviet encampments are being relocated and strengthened, and Soviet reports are showing Cubans in the construction of underground depots, hangars and runways.

The construction work is apparently concentrated in the main defense complex between Havana and the San Antonio de Los Baños air base in Caniaguá province and in the Sierra Maestra area of Oriente Province.

Hard Defensive Weapons

According to the private reports, some construction sites are entirely closed even to Cuban military personnel and work at these sites is performed exclusively by Soviet troops.

So far as can be determined, the military equipment still entering Cuba and the military work being carried out on the island fit into the category of "defensive weapons."

Under the October agreement between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev, the Soviet Union removed from Cuba its long-range nuclear missiles and its IL-28 jet bombers. These weapons were characterized as "offensive" by Mr. Kennedy.

The steady flow of reports on the expansion of the Soviet military establishment in Cuba has been a cause of growing concern to the Kennedy Administration in the months following the missile crisis. But, at least for the time being, the Administration does not regard this build-up as an immediate danger to the United States or

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to other countries of the Western Hemisphere.

The new reports on a mounting Soviet military effort in Cuba coincided with a decision today by Senate Republicans to open their own investigation into the abortive 1961 rebel invasion of Cuba's Bay of Pigs.

The investigation was ordered by the Senate Republican Policy Committee. Senator Everett McKinstry Dirksen of Illinois, minority leader in the Senate, said that the results of the inquiry may be presented to the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee.

Air Support Studied

Commenting on a recent statement by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy that United States air support had never been promised to the rebels in point of being controversial, Mr. Dirksen said: "This is a matter of such importance that it cannot be left in doubt so far as the facts are concerned."

The pattern of Soviet military activity in Cuba since the missile crisis last October and November has involved the extensive bolstering of Cuban defenses in the field of conventional arms. But there has been a special emphasis on highly sophisticated weaponry.

During the missile crisis, the Russians were estimated to have 18,200 men in Cuba. According to the private Havana reports, about 3,300 men have been withdrawn. But the reports noted that some replacements had been sent in and calculated present Soviet strength in Cuba at more than 12,000 men.

It is assumed that the Russians who left were the specialists attached to the intermediate and medium-range missile sites that were dismantled last fall.

The men who remain are said to be technicians in ground-to-air guided missiles and coastal artillery guided missiles; aviation specialists helping to operate the Cuban jet air force with its 150 MIG's; engineer and ordnance experts; and members of the combat units that presumably guard Soviet equipment and camps.

The estimate here is that it takes 250 Soviet troops to operate each of the 24 ground-to-air missile sites ringing the island. Thus, 6,000 men are believed to be assigned to these installations alone.

It is known that Cubans are being trained to operate these missile installations. But military specialists estimate that perhaps another year may be required before the installations can be turned over to the Premier Castro's forces.

Soviet specialists in Cuba are reported to be handling the tactical battlefield rockets known to United States military men as "frogs." These are weapons with a nuclear capacity and an over-the-horizon range of 15 to 25 miles. They resemble the United States Army's Honest John missile.

United States experts, however, have no positive information that nuclear tips for these weapons are actually stored in Cuba.

Reports from Cuba indicate that the general headquarters of the Soviet expeditionary force on the island is in the Palmarito district in southern Havana, occupying the installations of the former machine plant near the Sports Palace.

These reports have also pinpointed an area in Havana province and areas in Caniaguá and in the vicinity of Santa Clara, capital of Las Villas Province, as places where major Soviet sites are now under construction.

The reported site in Havana province lies between the San Antonio de Los Baños air force base, which is southeast of Havana, and Wajay. It is described as the site of an underground missile installation.